

Application N .: 09/277312Case No.: 53836LJS002**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-30. (canceled).

31. (currently amended) A method of preparing a flexible solid intumescent fire barrier material, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a halogen-free organic binder in the form of a latex binder;
- (b) drying the latex binder to remove any volatiles;
- (c) providing combining, in a substantially volatile free state, a mixture consisting essentially of the latex binder, water-insoluble intumescent mineral granules, halogen-free organic binder initially in the form of latex binder which has been dried to remove any volatiles, and phosphorus containing flame retardant; and

(d) mixing the mixture at high shear conditions using a twin screw extruder; wherein the resulting fire barrier material has a softness value from about 0.49 to about 1.45 mm and an expansion ratio at least 2.9 times greater than the same composition would have if processed under high shear conditions with volatiles present from about 6.9 to about 8.8.